

ROWING AT O'BRIEN'S BRIDGE

ST. MICHAEL'S ARE DUAL IRISH CHAMPIONS!

IN WHAT can only be described as a superlative achievement, St. Michael's brought off a magnificent eight and fours double at O'Brien's Bridge over the week-end and by so doing literally crowned themselves kings of Irish junior rowing.

The local club has had many great moments especially in the recent past, but Saturday's eights win will, when memories of other achievements have dimmed, surely stand the test of time. The cheering from the unashamedly partisan home crowd as they willed the nine heroes over the line for a famous win was unprecedented in modern day rowing and life-long followers of the sport, such as Willie Carmody, maintained that nothing quite like it was heard, or seen, in the past thirty of forty years.

This unique double, all too rarely brought off in this highly competitive under 18 grade, will rank as one of the



Donald Hanrahan, who stroked St. Michael's to two famous victories at O'Brien's Bridge.

finest achievements of any of the local clubs, particularly the eights win which heralded the breaking of a four year manna-op by St. Joseph's of Galway.

For such as coach Justin Sherin, one of the great St. Michael's clubmen, and captain Austin Leddin; for 16-year-old Damien Hickey, drafted in as bowman in the run-up to the race; and the members in general, a week-end of unmitigated joy. Spare a thought for Brian Henry, a long standing member of the eight but losing his place to Hickey.

These dual wins give St. Michael's their eighth Irish championship in a seven year period, which remarkably consists of all doubles; junior and intermediate eights, elite pairs and junior fours.

The race

Rowing conditions were perfect throughout the two-day, well run, Shannon R.C. organised regatta. Preliminary heats in the premier eights event saw St. Michael's given a torrid test by Carlow, having to come behind from three-quarters of a length before asserting their authority; St. Joseph's and Belfast's Methodists were the other qualifiers.

At the start of the final, following the inevitable tension filled moments as respective coxes sought for the perfect get-away, starter Michael Johnson got his crews away dead-on, and St. Michael's, striking a very fast rate (48 to the minute) got out slightly.

At the 500 mark, the race was wide open, with the slight advantage accruing to St. Michael's still. A pattern began to emerge after this though, with the local eight beginning to show up in a very favourable light. With stroke Donal Hanrahan striking a lively 36, which seemed to suit his not excessively heavy crew admirably, and showing the obvious benefit of an intensive two-weeks training stint, St. Michael's now looked capable of ending at the last four-year dominance of St. Joseph's.

With perfect rhythm, the locals surged out at times two-thirds of length as the half-way stage was passed and coming to the 1,000 metres one waited for the inevitable St. Joseph's challenge.

This was soon forthcoming but shrewd stroke as Hanrahan is, he was prepared. Raising his tempo to counteract this western advance, his crew were equal to it and still on top, it now became a matter of maintaining the precise standards rowing displayed throughout the race. This was duly and clinically achieved and proved enough to stave off the champions by half a length on the line.

A magnificent win, then for St. Michael's as they regained a championship last won in 1979, and a splendid race worthy of the many great ones we have seen in this grade. Unashamed emotion was shown by the local clubs followers as the nine heroes, who had landed on E the most famous of all races for St. Michael's, came ashore. Tom Larkin, the astute cox, got the traditional dunking in the river... he enjoyed it all. The winning final time was 4.15, the same as that recorded in the heat win against Carlow.

Fours

The heats of the fours championship on Friday saw a remarkable race involving St. Michael's, Neptune and Shannon's unbeaten Junior B Four. The holders, St. Michael's, were pushed all the way by both these crews so much so that the time at 4.34 was three seconds faster than that recorded in the final.

St. Michael's duly won through by over a length, with Shannon and Neptune being accredited with the same time in second place.

The final lay between St. Michael's and St. Joseph's, and after a good race down the course, the holders took control at a vital stage and ran out convincing winners in the end.

Two in a row then for the local four, with a crew consisting of John Dalton, Eamonn Ryan, John Madden, Donal Hanrahan (stroke), and Tom Larkin (cox). There was just one change from last year, Ryan coming in for Eoin Kearney, who is over-age.

In the small boat championships, St. Michael's had hopes of a treble, when Dalton and Hanrahan won through to the semi-final of the pairs. Against eventual winners, Neptune, though, the lack of practice together was obvious, and further compounded by steering errors, they went out of contention.

Cork B.C. (mens single sculls), Fermoy (women's sculls), Neptune (double sculls) were other winners. One of the most popular wins of the day came when the fledgling Offaly club, who do their training on the Grand Canal, won the club's first win out when their women's four won out.

Regatta

Both days were blessed with perfect rowing conditions for both championships and Shannon's 120th anniversary regatta, all well organised and kudos here to such as Tony Wallace, Brian Killilea, Noel Clancy, and such as Tony Tynane, and slip-steward Ceall O'Dowd. The overgrown state of the banks, though militated against spectator viewing, the only real viewing spot being



John Dalton, in the St. Michael's championship winning eight and four.

from the launching area, well behind the finishing line.

As expected, showing the sprightly form shown this season's length, Limerick crews dominated, fittingly the host club winning four; St. Michael's (apart from championships) and Limerick and Castletown two each.

The showdown between Shannon and St. Michael's for the title of top local Senior B Eight evolved into a torrid, gruelling event. St. Michael's showed half a length out at one stage but showing the form that since Limerick Regatta has made them all but invincible in this grade, Shannon powered through and in a very fine finish got out by three-quarters of a length to leave them very worthy winners over a splendid St. Michael's crew. Of interest, the time was 4.19, three seconds behind the Junior A Eights final time of 4.15. St. Michael's won the fours, their A's beating the B's.

The opening invitation eights race saw some notable names of former years doing battle with possibly Athlone being the 'honoured,' giving St. Michael's, a hectic race of it on the home stretch. Inspired no doubt by the deeds of their

juniors, such St. Michael's stalwarts as Declan Hartnett, Austin Leddin, Richie O'Brien, Brendan Tuite, Willie Carmody junr., etc., held on to win by a mere half canvas.

Shannon had a second coming in Senior C Eights. A different crew from that which won this grade earlier in the season, and powered by the nucleus of the Junior B Four, defeated St. Michael's, another Junior B dominated eight. Shannon's other wins came in Junior D when their four won once again, and Diarmuid Kelly, their promising sculler, won Senior B.

Limerick continued their dominance of Junior C grade. They met old rivals Marist once more in the eights final and helped by a mistake by the midlanders No. 4, came through in the early stages and never looked back to win by three-quarters of length. "Boat Club's" Junior D Eight kept pace with their C counterparts when winning another fine race from Shannon.

Castletown, too, had their moments of glory with a splendid win in Senior C Fours and the ladies novice four also had a fine victory much to the delight of the big home following.

Crews

Winning Limerick crews were:

St. Michael's Junior A Eight Champions of Ireland: Damien Hickey, bow; John Callinan, Liam O'Neill, Brendan Murphy, John Dalton, Eamonn Ryan, John Madden, Donal Hanrahan, stk.; Tom Larkin, cox.

St. Michael's Junior A Four Champions of Ireland: John Dalton, bow; Eamonn Ryan, John Madden, Donal Hanrahan, stk.; Tom Larkin, cox.

Shannon R.C. Senior B 8: P. Healy, D. Kelly, D. Staunton, A. Power, J. O'Neill, P. O'Brien, T. Ryan, R. Morrison, stk.; P. O'Toole, cox.

St. Michael's Senior B 4: M. Ryan, bow; J. O'Connell, C. Clarke, C. Moloney, stk.; C. O'Callaghan, cox.

St. Michael's Invitation Eight: N. Aherne, W. Carmody, B. Tuite, A. Cumiskey, A. Leddin, R. O'Brien, D. Hartnett, J. Aherne, K. Lehane.

Limerick Junior C 8: A. Stack, P. Mulrooney, J. McCarthy, E. McCarthy, P. Flannery, M. Murnane, J. Fulham, E. Crean, stk.; P. O'Brien, cox.

Limerick Junior D 8: P. Mulrooney, M. O'Brien, P. Kingston, E. McCarthy, A. O'Brien, B. Harrington, E. Crean, K. Malone, S. Willis, cox.

Shannon Junior D Four: D. Stembridge, D. Collins, A. Kelly, P. Collins, stk.; J. Coyne (cox).

Shannon Senior C 8: S. McGowan, bow; D. Ryan, C. Clifford, B. O'Callaghan, P. Harwood, P. O'Brien, T. O'Connor, O. O'Toole, stk.; P. O'Toole, cox.

Inter Firm Fixtures

TUESDAY, JULY 15

League: M.A.C. v. A.I.B., 6.15, Pike Field 1, Ml. Cronin. T.F.X. v. St. Joseph's Hospital, 7.30, Pike Field 1, Ml. Cronin.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

SPS Cup—Garda v. Aughinish B or TSB, 6.15, Castlemungret, T. Kelly. Cement v. Pako A, 7.30, Castlemungret, T. Kelly. E.S.B. v. N.I.H.E., 6.15, Ballysheedy 1, J. McGrath. L.I.A. v. Wang 3/17.30, Ballysheedy 1, J. McGrath. Wang D v. Euro Paks, 6.15, Castletroy, A. McNamara. Wang B v. Worksapce/Westinghouse, 7.30, Castletroy, A. McNamara. 12th Batt. B v. Telecom D, 6.15, Barrack Field, T. Power. 12th Batt. A v. Pako B, 7.30, Barrack Field, T. Power. S.P.S. A v. Wilo Pumps, 6.15, Cals Park 1, F. Hofter. 12th Batt. C v. Aughinish A, 7.30, Cals Park 1, F. Hofter. SPS B v. L.B.A., 6.15, Cals Park 2, P. Kiely. M.W.H.B. v. Jas. McMahon's, 7.30, Cals Park 2, P. Kiely. SPS C v. Varian, 6.15, Cals Park 3, Ml. Hourigan. St. Joseph's T/S v. Verbatim A, 7.30, Cals Park 3, Ml. Hourigan.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

Telecom A v. Atlas Alum., 6.15, Crescent Grounds, Rosbrien, S. Brown. Telecom B v. STC, 7.30, Crescent Grounds, Rosbrien, S. Brown. Analog B v. Fulflex, 6.15, Mungret College, S. McNamara. Analog A v. Verbatim C or Shannon Dev. Co., 7.30, Mungret College, S. McNamara. Teachers v. Craig Gardner or Parkes GRP, 6.15, Pike No. 1, Ml. Kiely.

Stabright v. Wang C, 7.30, Pike No. 1, Ml. Kiely.

Verbatim Media v. CIE Rail, 6.15, Bateman Park, D. Kerley.

Civil Service v. Howmedica A, 7.30, Bateman Park, D. Kerley.

Taxis v. I.W.P., 6.15, Kennedy Park, Rathuard. J. McInerney.

Bakeries v. Wang A, 7.30, Kennedy Park, Rathuard. J. McInerney.

L.G.O. C v. De Beers, 6.15, Singland Park, P. Walsh.

L.G.O. A v. Kwik-Lok, 7.30, Singland Park, P. Walsh.

Krups B v. Howmedica Cor Stella United, 6.15, Aisling Park, Rathuard, O. Hayes.

Krups A v. Howmedica D or Mittel Delta, 7.30, Aisling Park, Rathuard, O. Hayes.

THURSDAY, JULY 17

M.A.C. v. Howmedica C, 6.15, Cals Park 2, A. Meagher.

Limerick Leader v. Essilor, 7.30, Cals Park 2, A. Meagher.

SPS Cup—TFX v. ICAAF, 6.15, Pike No. 1, K. O'Driscoll.

St. Joseph's Hospital v. Shannon Airport, 7.30, Pike No. 1, K. O'Driscoll.

A.I.B. v. Postal Celtic, 6.15, Pike No. 2, P. J. Hogan.

More Fixtures for Friday, July 18 will appear on Wednesday night's Limerick Leader.

● All cups won last year must be returned to the committee on or before Tuesday, July 15. Clubs failing to return the cups will be removed from all cup competitions.

● Cup draws take place on Tuesday, July 15 at 8.30 p.m. in Connolly Hall. All teams are requested to be represented at this meeting.

Schoolboys Fixtures

TUESDAY, JULY 15

12 A Cup semi final, Star Rovers v. Caherdavin, 6.30, Healy's Field, B. Kennedy. 10 A League, Carew Park v. Glenagross, 7.00, Carew Park, J. Kiely.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

13 B Cup, semi final—Weston Villa v. Summerville, 7.00, Cals 3, P. Collins. Regional v. Wembley Rovers, 7.00, Dooradoyle, T. Eaton. Park Rangers v. Ballynanty

B, 7.00, Aidan Park, P. Darcy.

14B Cup semi final replay—Glenagross v. Star, 6.30, Healy's Field, T. Williams.

THURSDAY, JULY 17

12C Cup Final, Shannon Town v. Weston Villa, 7.30, Granville Park, G. Naughton, Linesmen, B. Kennedy and E. Bermingham.

12A Cup final (Provisional)—Aisling v. Star Rovers or Caherdavin A, 6.30, Granville Park, B. Kennedy, Linesmen, G. Naughton and E. Bermingham.

10C Cup semi final, Ballynanty B v. Glenagross, 7.00, Moylish, S. Fitzgerald.

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